# America at Hunger's Edge

The New York Times Magazine

Photographs by
Brenda Ann Kenneally

September 6, 2020

The New York Times Magazine
JULY 14, 2019
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The New York Times Magazine

September 6, 2020

Photograph by Brenda Ann Kenneally for The New York Times

**6** America at Hunger's Edge
*Photographs by Brenda Ann Kenneally*

The pandemic, with its epic lines at food banks, has revealed what was hidden in plain sight: that the struggle to put adequate meals on the table — what experts call "food insecurity" — is a persistent one for millions of Americans. A special issue documenting three months in a national food crisis.

*Introduction by Adrian Nicole LeBlanc*

Jasmine Williams, 2, lives in Gary, Ind. During the pandemic, she and her family have had to rely on food from the Salvation Army and meals provided by the school district. Page 6.

4 **Contributors** / 5 **The Thread** / 50, 52, 54 **Puzzles** / 50 **Puzzle Answers**

**Behind the Cover** *Kathy Ryan, director of photography: "For this week's cover story, the photojournalist Brenda Ann Kenneally traveled across the country for three months to document the food insecurity that has left millions of Americans struggling to feed their families during the pandemic. This photograph of Sonia Rodriguez, 4, holding a loaf of bread from a Salvation Army delivery that she and her brothers had been rummaging through with excitement, conveys how precious even the most basic food can be to many children in the United States." Photograph by Brenda Ann Kenneally for The New York Times.*

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*Kenneally in her camper on May 5, 2020.*
*Photograph by Rafael Eduardo Gonzalez.*

**Brenda Ann Kenneally** — *Photographs throughout issue*

Brenda Ann Kenneally is a multimedia journalist who, over 30 years, has produced participatory media projects with families from her home community, including "Upstate Girls: Unraveling Collar City." She is currently assembling a multimedia autobiography, charting her experience from being a disenfranchised youth to becoming a Guggenheim fellow and frequent contributor to the magazine. For this week's issue, she spent 92 days on the road documenting more than 50 families. "I knew from decades of experience living in and among families who silently and shamefully field the full range of scarcity as a permanent condition that in times of crisis, there is a brief moment when blame is lifted and we can focus on attending to the need," she says. "I knew this would be a fleeting opportunity to have a rare conversation about systemic inequity."

**Adrian Nicole LeBlanc** — *Introduction, Page 6*

Adrian Nicole LeBlanc, an independent journalist and MacArthur fellow, was embedded in an assisted-living facility as Kenneally began her trip for this issue. They have worked together since 2003. "I was reporting on the many staff who feed and care for older adults, whose collective experience of this pandemic remains largely invisible," LeBlanc says. "Brenda's shrewd dispatches helped me better understand how the wages of labor that kept us all alive connected to the food struggles far outside my door."

*(Additional contributor credits on Page 53)*

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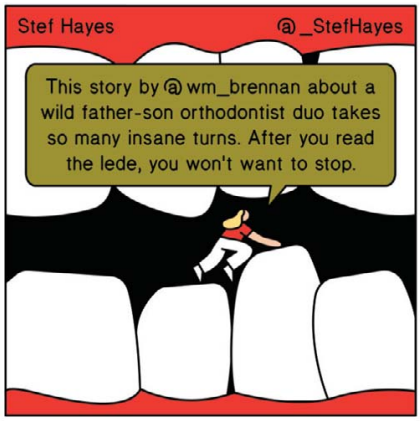
*Readers respond to the 8.23.20 issue.*

### RE: BITE CLUB

*William Brennan wrote about a father-son orthodontist duo whose theories have made them celebrities to incels.*


Stef Hayes
@_StefHayes
This story by @wm_brennan about a wild father-son orthodontist duo takes so many insane turns. After you read the lede, you won't want to stop.

**I enjoyed the** provocative and interesting article "Bite Club," by William Brennan, and the controversial orthotropics movement, especially on jaw and face sizes and how they have evolved. But was it really necessary to point out that the anthropologist who assisted in the article was missing two molars, which was noticed when she laughed? It seemed like a cheap-shot attempt at irony.
*Tom Burke, Fox River Grove, Ill.*

**Mr. Brennan — as** a retired orthodontist, I found your article very interesting, with multiple accurate facts and many unanswered questions like, "What are the dental changes that don't occur as a result of a softer diet, and how do these contribute to crowded teeth and third-molar impactions?" What I found distracting was that in the photograph on Page 25, the model of human dentition on the counter was upside down.
*Dr. Tony Terra, N.Y.U.C.D.*

**Besides the obvious** immoral action to experiment on his own children, the article leaves one uncomfortable because there is a real chance the Mews are right. Dentistry unfortunately deserves a reputation for promoting questionable, and in some cases, wholly unfounded practices that run into the thousands of dollars per patient per year. If the profession were more self-critical, I think I could easily dismiss the Mews as quackery. However, they are right that dentistry as a profession is one of the worst fields regarding the use of evidence-based practices. This doesn't make the Mews any less horrifying . . . but I have to admit that they do ask really good questions that are not seriously considered by their opponents.
*G.R., Atlanta*

**My wife is** a medical doctor and a naturopath. She has read much about the health and bone structure of preindustrial people and has come to much the same conclusion. I have no idea whether, from a clinical perspective, the Mews are onto something or not. But the attack by the conventional community should suggest that they are exposing a raw nerve. The climax of the article, the interview with Janet Monge, is priceless.
*Leonard Waks, Bridgeport, Conn.*

**What a bizarre** trajectory to this story: violent misogynists, a father who seeks to deform his daughter as an experiment, two men who are ejected from professional organizations. All this serves to counterpoint the excellent climax of the story: that ancient humans really did not have crooked teeth! Who knew? I feel so oddly conflicted after reading this, which I didn't expect: as if the Mews are quacks but also maybe I might start feeding my kids a few more carrot sticks?
*A. Snell, Canada*

### RE: BOOGALOO

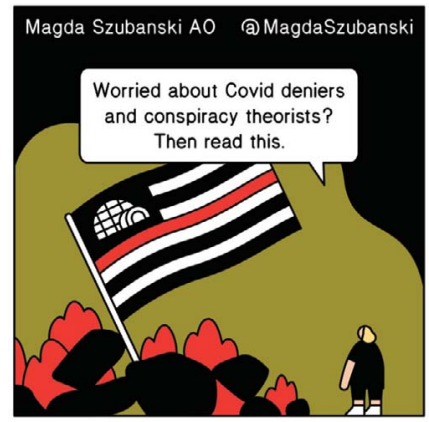
*Leah Sottile wrote about the rise of the latest antigovernment movement that stemmed from an internet meme.*

**A fascinating and** concerning article. I have to wonder if the loss of community

**THE STORY, ON INSTAGRAM**

Beautiful image. Sad reality. Borders are some of the most discriminating structures we have. @rijannu

**'I feel so oddly conflicted after reading this, which I didn't expect.'**




contributes. Autos, suburbs, long commutes, telephones and many other inventions were intended to make life better. Perhaps these changes have also reduced in-person interaction from historical norms. Humans are social creatures and need each other. Then the internet arrived.
*Tom, Denver*

**Incredible and important** reporting; however, several characterizations of these groups as conservative or right-wing throughout seem unfair. It's the kind of detail that turns right-of-center middlers off, and if we can't agree that these poor people (who we should not forget are frustrated, misguided citizens themselves) have at their core become extremist, anti-American enemies of both conservative and liberal Americans — Democrats, Republicans, Tea Partyers, Independents and any other groups on the political spectrum alike — then what can we agree on?
*Phillip H., Dallas*

### CORRECTIONS:

*An article on Aug. 16 about the intelligence community during the Trump administration referred incorrectly to a presidential office. It is the White House Counsel's Office, not the White House Office of Legal Counsel.*

*An article on Aug. 16 about the body's immune response to Covid-19 misstated how a drug, anakinra, works. It does not mimic the body's own antibodies. It mimics proteins produced by the body, but it is not an antibody.*

*Send your thoughts to magazine@nytimes.com.*

Photograph by Kevin Cooley

Illustrations by Giacomo Gambineri

# Americ Hunger

In the pandemic economy, nearly one in eight U.S. adults say their households don't have enough to eat. But the lockdown, with its epic lines at food banks, has also revealed what was hidden in plain sight: that the struggle to put adequate meals on the table — what experts call "food insecurity" — is a persistent one for millions. This special issue documents three months in an American food crisis.

# aat
# 's Edge

**Photographs by**
**Brenda Ann Kenneally**

Introduction by Adrian Nicole LeBlanc

With additional reporting by Tim Arango, Maddy Crowell, Concepción de León, Lovia Gyarkye, Jake Nevins, Kevin Pang and Malia Wollan

**In March, the** photographer Brenda Ann Kenneally was visiting Troy, N.Y., when the coronavirus pandemic hit the East Coast. She grew up in the area, bouncing among friends and group homes after her mother kicked her out when she was 12. Kenneally has spent decades immersed in the intimate lives of a group of upstate families who share her legacy, using images to explore the way economic forces ravage people's lives for generations. "I knew every single layer of disadvantage they lived on a daily basis would be exacerbated by Covid," she says.

As April unfolded, Kenneally checked on friends in crowded apartments and shelters in and around Troy, and for weeks she was the only person wearing a mask. Stressors were so common — evictions, unemployment, isolation — that Covid-19 hadn't yet struck many of them as particularly significant. But as jobs continued to disappear in New York and around the country, Kenneally knew that millions of Americans were now being thrown into the kind of precarity that the people she knew had long endured. "It was the moment to connect the root causes of all the things that people could be shamed for with what you see in front of the camera," she says. "The situations that define a life of scarcity were becoming democratized."

She returned to Queens, where she lives, packed up her pull camper and enlisted Rafael Gonzalez, the father of her 26-year-old son, beginning what would become a 92-day trip across the country documenting food insecurity. She and Gonzalez met as homeless teenagers working for a carnival, so they knew the road.

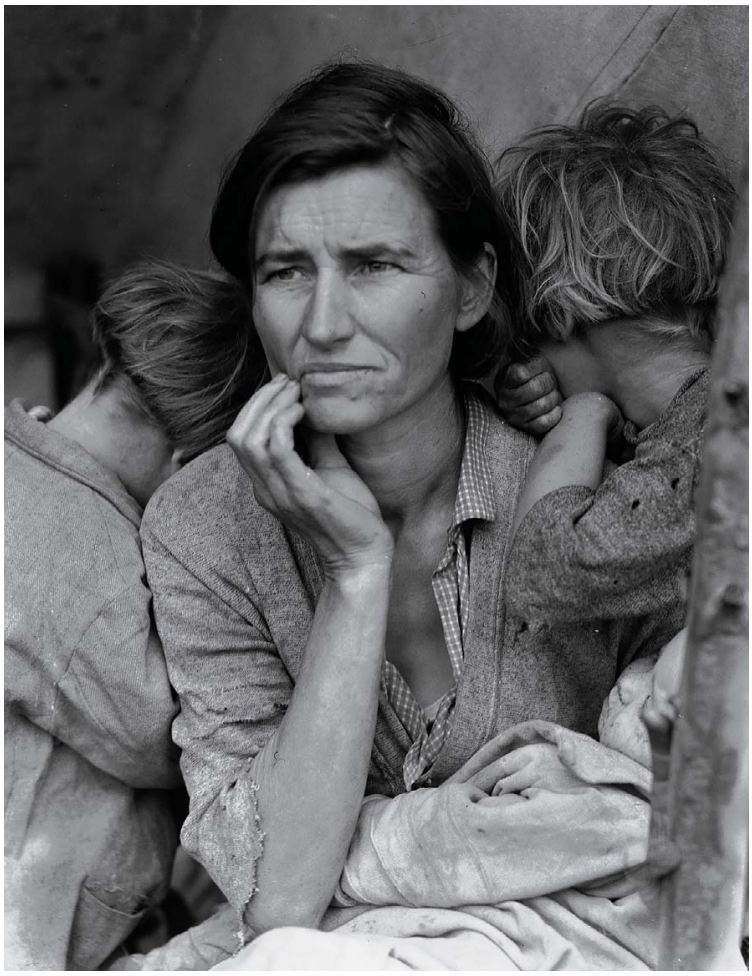
The highways were quiet as they headed north. They visited Salvation Armys and food pantries in Canandaigua, Utica and Buffalo. Kenneally knocked on car windows and walked the lines. Every postindustrial town and city they passed through looked abandoned. "You couldn't tell if they had been closed down because of globalization three decades ago or Covid," she says.

They made a brief return to Troy before heading west. On Mother's Day, Kenneally joined the Stocklas family for a meal. Family members had pooled their benefits from SNAP (the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program — food stamps) to buy the food. "I've been watching the Stocklases struggle to put dinner on the table for 15 years," Kenneally says. Kenneally's mother was aided by food stamps after her father left, and she used federal food benefits, too, especially when raising her own son as a single mother.

Then Kenneally and Gonzalez left for Pennsylvania. From there to Gary, Ind., to Chicago, charities and nonprofits were adjusting to new safety protocols to deliver food. The Salvation Army has more than 7,600 centers of operation, and many waived eligibility requirements. Food banks distribute to local pantries, which in turn get groceries directly to people or to organizations that serve hot meals. Volunteers — many of them senior citizens — were now at risk, so staff was scrambling to find help while converting to curbside pickup. In Parma, Ohio, the school district, like so many across the country, had essentially become its own food bank. In Memphis, a woman became a distribution point for her condominium complex, giving away boxed lunches that she retrieved from her niece's school.

Precarity wasn't new to Kenneally, but what was striking now was the astonishing scale. Lines at food banks stretched to hundreds of cars, some carrying people who had never sought food assistance before. In Houston, Catholic Charities was providing food to as many as 2,000 people every six hours. The Mamie George Community Center there gave out 567,000 pounds of food in 2019; between March 18, 2020, and July 6, when Kenneally arrived, the M.G.C.C. had already distributed 528,437 pounds.

At a time when the heat and the fear were rising, when Americans were urged to keep distance from loved ones, when protesters — outdoors



— were risking their safety, strangers let Kenneally and Gonzalez, wearing masks, into their homes and kitchens to watch them prepare their food and eat. "They understood that telling their food-struggle story now and even pre-Covid was important," Kenneally says. She moved in close, photographing this ordinary intimacy under extraordinary circumstances. "I want you to feel like you are there, to go in there, to be vulnerable and to honor the fact that these people are making themselves vulnerable."

**In 1936, Dorothea** Lange took what would become a world-famous photograph of 32-year-old Florence Owens Thompson, in Nipomo, Calif. It was early March, and Lange was speeding home to Berkeley, where she lived. She glimpsed a handwritten sign that read "Pea-Pickers Camp," but at first she drove right past it.

She had spent that bitter cold February following migrant workers who had fled the Dust Bowl and were following crops. Many were starving. By 1936, thousands were flooding into California every month, and police officers were stationed at the state's borders to turn back anyone deemed a "transient." Lange was taking photographs for the Resettlement Administration, a New Deal agency that would soon change its name to the Farm Security Administration, which relocated poor urban and rural people into government-planned communities. The government's goal was to educate voters who hadn't been so hard hit by the Great Depression and didn't know much about the degrees of suffering in their midst.

After Lange passed the pea-pickers sign, she drove for another 20 miles, wanting to believe, she later wrote in an article, that she already had enough evidence of hardship, but she had an argument with herself: "Dorothea, how about that camp back there? … Nobody could ask this of you, now could they? … To turn back certainly is not necessary. Isn't this just one more of the same?" She turned back to see for herself.

She found Thompson and three of her children huddled under a tattered, dirty tent. "She said that they had been living on frozen vegetables from the surrounding fields, and birds that the children killed," Lange wrote. "She seemed to know that my pictures might help her, and so she helped me."

Lange's photographs of Thompson ran in The San Francisco News shortly afterward. The public reaction to the image of an attractive mother and her daughters was immediate: letters of concern, calls to action, donations. The government assembled 20,000 pounds of emergency food, but by the time it was shipped to that particular migrant camp, the woman had already packed up her seven hungry children and pressed on. The image, which eventually came to be titled "Migrant Mother," circulated widely and increased popular support for the New Deal programs that evolved into what

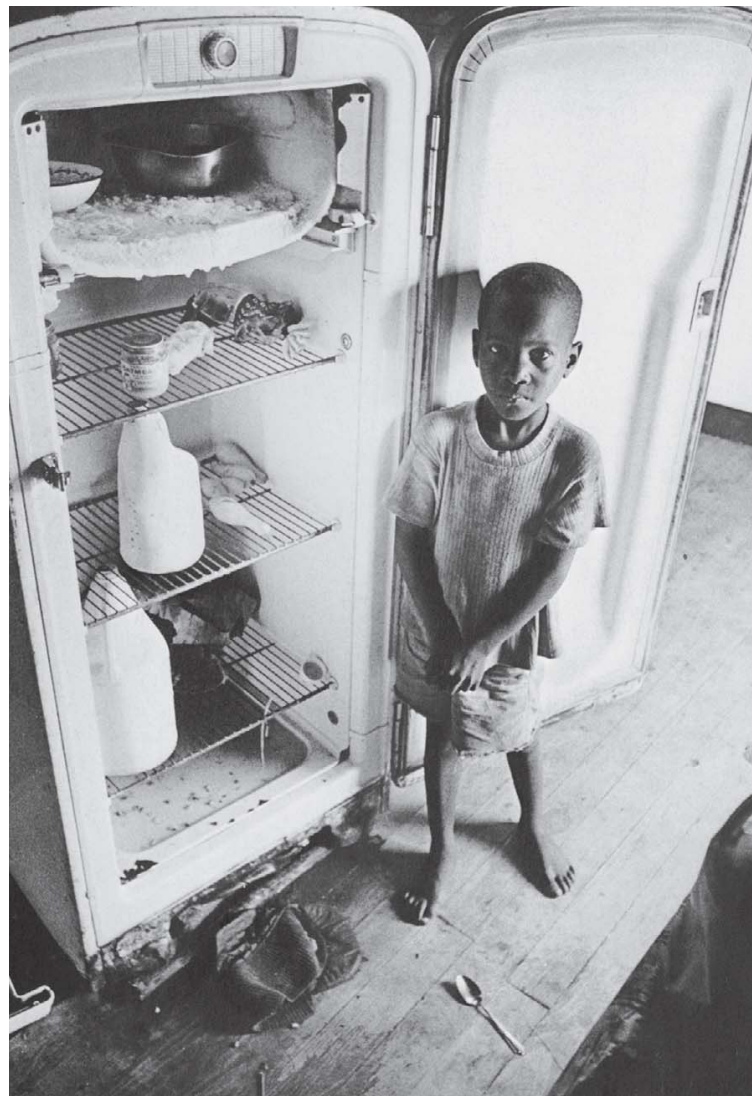
Dorothea Lange's "Migrant Mother," photographed in Nipomo, Calif., in 1936.

remains of our social safety net today. Until 1978, her name — and that she was of Cherokee descent — remained unknown.

Our treatment of hunger as an emergency, rather than a symptom of systemic inequities, has long informed our response to it, and as a result, government programs have been designed to alleviate each peak rather than to address the factors that produce them. "Hunger becoming public is the start of a struggle, but it's only the beginning of what's required for change," says Laurie B. Green, an associate professor of history at the University of Texas at Austin, whose research looks at the moment in the 1960s when public health commissions, politicians and the media "discovered" hunger.

The severing of hunger from its socioeconomic context minimized the relationship between the restructuring of land, labor and industrial farming and its effect on diets and access to healthful food. Federal surplus-commodity programs grew out of the Great Depression, providing hungry people with leftover staples like flour, rice and lard. But their priority was to subsidize white farmers; the starchy diet did little to alleviate malnutrition. In the early 1960s, some areas began to offer food stamps instead. But because the coupons needed to be purchased every month, and values were set by local counties, they were inaccessible to the poorest — especially Southern Black residents — who were now unable to get any food at all. Activists like Fannie Lou Hamer organized against the program. The purchase requirement remained in place until 1977.

The first food bank opened in 1967. That December, Look magazine published photographs by Al Clayton, part of an exposé about a destitute family living in a windowless shack on no more than "coffee, flour and an inch of rice in a cellophane bag." The next year, a CBS documentary, "Hunger in America," featured a baby in an American hospital crib dying of starvation onscreen. Public pressure led to legislation that improved access to food stamps and created the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) in 1972.



But those programs weren't designed to eliminate need. WIC limits the age of child recipients; SNAP meets roughly two-thirds of a household's food needs, and recipients run out of food by the end of the month. "Our whole safety net is based on the premise that all able-bodied adults can get a job, and every kind of assistance is temporary," says the Princeton sociologist Kathryn Edin.

In the 1980s, in response to cuts to food benefits during the Reagan administration, hunger was discovered again with commissions and reports. The underlying problem was bound up with the increasingly punishing nature of the American



An image from Al Clayton's exploration of poverty in the South in 1967.

economy, especially for people of color. Food banks were supposed to fill in the gaps. But today more than 37 million Americans are food insecure, according to the U.S.D.A. "We call it an emergency food system, but it's a 50-year emergency," says Noreen Springstead, executive director of WhyHunger, which supports grass-roots organizations that approach food insecurity systemically.

**Food insecurity no** longer looks like a skinny mother in a tent or children with rickets and kwashiorkor; it looks like fast food at the end of the month when SNAP runs out, or rural "food deserts," where few food banks reach. Its legacy is diabetes, high blood pressure and obesity.

The pandemic has revealed the fragility of a highly centralized industrial food system and has given us a glimpse of the tenuous lives of the workers who farm, process, deliver and ring up the food we need. It also has shown, as Springstead points out, just "how close people are to the edge of the abyss. They can't keep their apartment and can't pay for their groceries; they are one paycheck away from, 'What am I going to do?' "

Programs created to help the poorest Americans now supplement the working poor. More than half of all SNAP recipients work. The pandemic has heightened food insecurity. The Salvation Army reported an 84 percent increase since last year in the number of boxes handed out at their drive-through pantries. Meals on Wheels has seen a 47 percent increase in the number of people it serves. In addition to federal subsidies, food banks rely on private donations, which historically decline during economic downturns. Corporate donors are selling more of the food they would ordinarily donate because it's no longer expiring on the shelves.

Even before the pandemic, food insecurity was entangled with unaffordable housing, health care costs, unreliable transportation. In Troy, before she traveled across the country, Kenneally met with her friend Barbara Broomall. Three days before the eviction moratorium, federal marshals put Broomall, her three children and their belongings on the street. With the pandemic lockdown, it became clear that her only option was a room in the Schuyler Inn, a homeless shelter that was once a hotel. Broomall and her son both received S.S.I. for mental health issues, and the $1,457 rent ate up the checks. She had no car to reach her children's schools to collect the food they were distributing, though before the school kitchens were up and running, they were offering only snacks — Ritz crackers, chips, granola bars — so it wasn't worth bus fare. The Schuyler Inn didn't provide Wi-Fi, so her daughter tried to connect to her schoolwork in a Burger King parking lot.

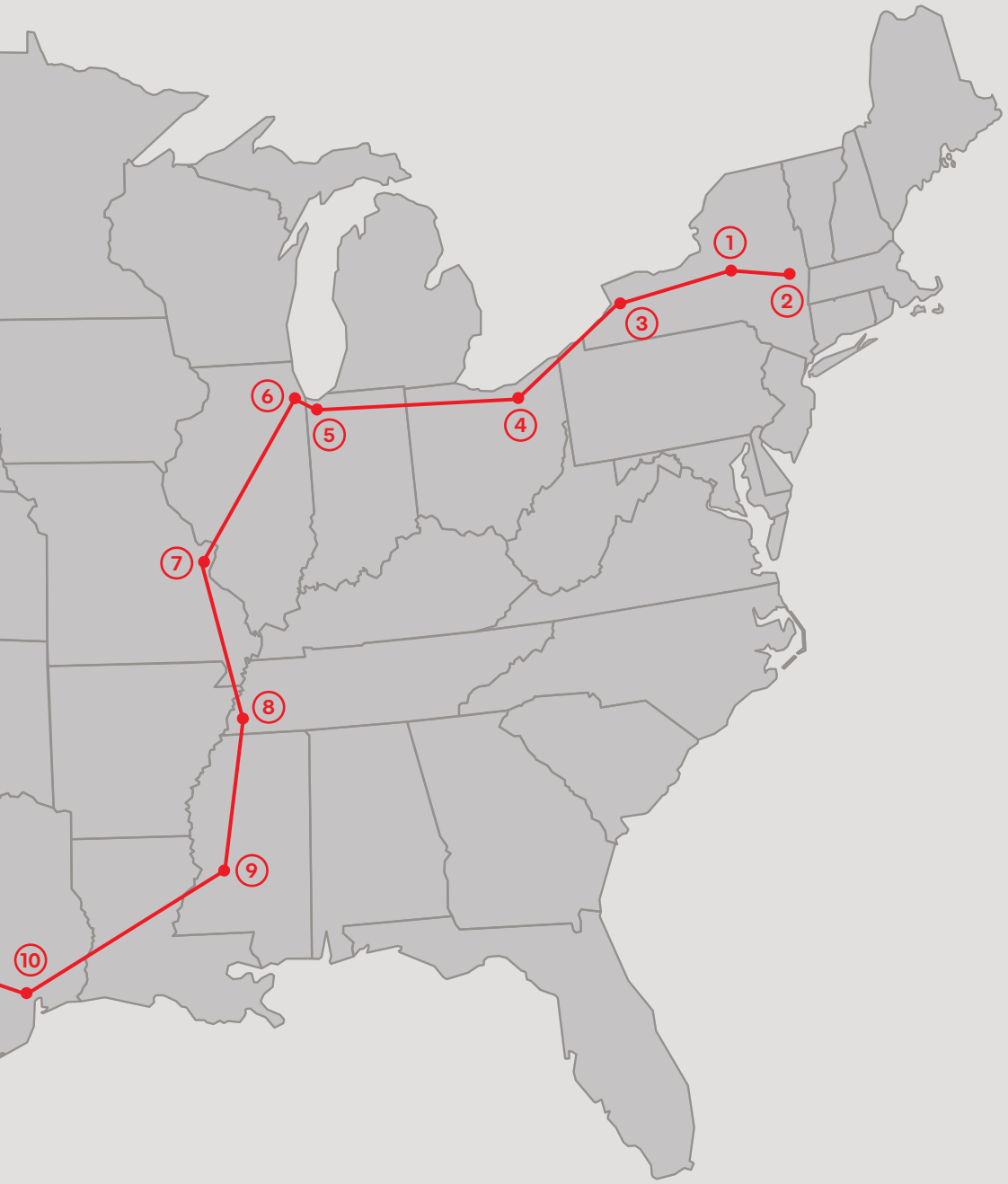
If they go on for too long, temporary solutions become permanent. Food banks become bureaucracies; hotels meant to hold the overflow of shelters, like the Schuyler Inn, become homes. Public schools, which have never reconciled their hours with the actual schedules of working people, become essential hubs for entire communities.

On July 16, toward the end of her travels, Kenneally pulled up to the fields of Hatch, N.M. Teodula Portillo, 47, had been up since 4 a.m. She had allowed her teenage sons 20 more minutes to sleep and didn't wake her 11-year-old twin daughters because they cannot work legally until they are 12. By 5:30 a.m., Portillo and her boys were bent over picking onions, for which they are paid by the bushel. Employers are required to pay minimum wage only for certain tasks that are part of agricultural work. Portillo receives SNAP intermittently — if she earns too much, they are not eligible. Kenneally knelt on the dirt and began shooting, some 900 miles from Nipomo, where Lange took her iconic photograph, which helped Americans discover the hunger that both she and Kenneally knew too much about. The attachment to this discovering is as persistent as the underlying social problems — which to this day remain ignored.

From the estate of Al Clayton

① May 8, 2020 — Oneida, N.Y.
② May 9, 2020 — Troy, N.Y.
③ May 14, 2020 — Buffalo, N.Y.
④ May 27, 2020 — Parma, Ohio
⑤ June 3, 2020 — Gary, Ind.
⑥ June 8, 2020 — Cicero, Ill.
⑦ June 12, 2020 — St. Louis, Mo.
⑧ June 17, 2020 — Memphis, Tenn.
⑨ June 23, 2020 — Jackson, Miss.
⑩ July 7, 2020 — Houston, Texas
⑪ July 18, 2020 — Hatch, N.M.
⑫ July 23, 2020 — Tucson, Ariz.
⑬ July 31, 2020 — San Diego, Calif.

The following photographs, taken over three months, document the lives of families whom Kenneally and the magazine's photo team found with the generous aid of local nonprofits: food banks and pantries, religious charities, government agencies and other social-services groups, all part of the nationwide network of food-assistance organizations that has experienced a tremendous surge in




need amid the economic devastation of Covid-19. In all, Kenneally traveled more than 3,600 miles and visited more than 50 families, capturing thousands of images, sometimes over multiple visits on multiple days. Look for more work from this project in a special newspaper section — "The New Faces of Want" — in the Sept. 5 edition of The Times, or visit the project online at nytimes.com/food-insecurity.

**May 8, 2020 — Oneida, N.Y.**

A week after New York's governor announced that schools would remain closed for the rest of the academic year, Luckas Manaseri, 12, was making apple bread using the chopped-up fruit from a week's worth of school lunches. Every weekday throughout March, April and May, Luckas's father, John Manaseri, visited Luckas's school to pick up the free lunches being made available to low-income families. "When everything first started, they weren't giving you the extra food stamps," says Manaseri, 39, who earns minimum wage working at a grocery store. Since then, an improvement in benefits has increased the grocery budget for the four-member household to $400 a month from $300. "I've got a little more wiggle room," Manaseri says. "If the kids want extra bananas or apples in the house, I can grab them." — *M. W.*



Photographs by Brenda Ann Kenneally for The New York Times

Great Value
100% Arabica
Breakfast Blend
Ground Coffee
CINNAMON RAISIN
GRILL MATES
SNACK BARS
10 SHELLS
STAND
STUFF
TOPS
PARIS
CAFÉ
9 Rue Fontenau
ORIGINAL
EVIL MONKEY

**May 9, 2020 — Troy, N.Y.**

"We're always pulling together to make meals happen," says Kandice Zakrzewski (left). Last year, she and her husband, Dustin Ratleph, and their two children, Brayden, 6, and Matthew, 2 (right), moved from Tennessee back to her hometown, Troy. Like so many who live in hunger's shadow, the members of Zakrzewski's extended family, the Stocklases (whom Kenneally has known and photographed for years), gain and lose benefits like food stamps depending on their fluctuating employment status in an unstable economy. Zakrzewski lost her job at a local school-bus company in March, for example. To stretch their funds to the end of the month, they pool resources to provide big, family-style dinners for all. "Even if it's just pitching in $10 when we don't have any food stamps," Zakrzewski says, "we all pitch in." — *J. N.*

cafe au lait
less is more
UNLESS
IT'S
coffee
Great Value
Breakfast Blend
Juicy Juice
RONZONI
Kraft
Stove Top
CHICKEN
pics
CUT GREEN BEANS
Ocean Spray
CRANBERRY

**May 14, 2020 — Buffalo**

With the pandemic still peaking in Western New York as May got underway, Ramadan was a particularly challenging time for the Abdulshukur family. In better days, Zubaidah Abdulshukur (standing), whose son Abdul Malik (folded arms), 12, is fasting at lunch, gets basic foods at a nearby grocery store and halal meats and spices at a Burmese shop in town that reminds her of her childhood in Burma, now Myanmar. Abdulshukur, 40, and her husband, who works at a recycling plant, receive $1,000 a month in food stamps for their six children; when the benefits run out, Abdulshukur picks up donations from a food truck around the corner. "I cannot say, 'Hey, you cannot eat,'" she says. "No food? I go and find it." But the Covid-19 crisis prompted Abdulshukur to avoid going into stores, and she began relying entirely on the food pantry. That forced her to be creative, for this year's Ramadan meals, with the spices she already had at home. — *M. C.*

GOYA
Chick Peas
Garbanzos
GOYA
Black Beans
Frijoles Negros
Sardinas
Sardines
Sardinas
ADULTS 50+
MULTIVITAMIN
1 TABLET PER DAY
400
Vegetable Oil
Orange
Starry Strips
Price Rite
COLA
for thought
onservation Kit

**May 27, 2020 — Parma, Ohio**

By late May, food banks and other nonprofits nationwide were still straining to meet the overwhelming demand. In Parma, the local school district was passing out a week's worth of bagged breakfasts and lunches on Wednesdays and Fridays to about 1,500 children. "We had one lady come up to get food for her four little kids," says Deborah Saylor, one of the dozen women who became known this spring as the Lunch Lady Legends. "She told us she didn't have anything in the cupboards at all and just started bawling her eyes out. All of a sudden, I'm crying, the other girls are crying. It's amazing what has happened in this time of need." After each week's distribution, Saylor packs up her own car with bagged meals to deliver to families who lack the transportation to get to the local high school. — *J. N.*

LEGENDS
THANK YOU
SUPERIOR SERVICE

**May 27, 2020 — Parma, Ohio**

In the Horsburgh household, the weekly runs to pick up donated food at the local high school — a social service the family had not needed for years, until the Covid-19 crisis — became a fun diversion for the children stuck at home. "The kids love to go and see what's new," says Laura Horsburgh, whose son Gabriel, 2, is holding strawberries after one trip. Sometimes there's chocolate milk, a treat the family rarely buys; other days there might be Dr. Seuss storybooks. The family has been cooking together more often during the pandemic and making jams and jellies out of the fruits packed into the giveaway boxes, which often include recipes. And they are finding that their eating habits are changing. "I have two daughters that have discovered in this whole pandemic how much they love salads, which is really wonderful," Horsburgh says. — *T.A.*

**June 3, 2020 — Gary, Ind.**

Phil Tanas and Latia Hinkle met several years ago when they worked as cooks at the Horseshoe Casino in Hammond, Ind. He lost his job last fall; she lost hers during the shutdown. Even with food stamps, they have needed to rely on food from the Salvation Army and meals provided by the school district. Cooking for Hinkle's five children — who range in age from 2-year-old Jasmine, seen here, to 17 — can be a challenge. Donated food has meant adding unfamiliar ingredients to the family meals, like fresh coconuts, whose milk and flesh are turned into smoothies. Perhaps their proudest culinary moment came when Hinkle turned a box of day-old doughnuts into a casserole dish, a French-toast doughnut bake. "When you're poor," Tanas says, "you get really creative with food." — *K. P.*

Prairie Farms
LOCAL FRESH
1% LOW FAT
MILK
VITAMIN A & D

**June 6, 2020 — Gary, Ind.**

Doris Hall, 63, is known as Grandma Doris to almost everyone in her family: seven children, 24 grandchildren and 14 great-grandchildren. On weekends, Hall takes in as many as nine great-grandchildren — and occasionally all 14 — often so their parents can work. The rules are strict: naptime in the afternoon, bedtime at 9 p.m. and, most important, they must eat whatever she cooks. "I told them, 'You're not getting anything if you don't eat the food here,'" says Hall, whose $194 in monthly food stamps usually runs out after a few weeks. Breakfasts consist of rice, eggs and sausage. For lunch, Hall makes "microwaveable stuff," like corn dogs, hot dogs and chicken nuggets that she picks up at a Salvation Army food bank. DeAndre Lacy Jr., 7 (blue shirt), who spends most weekends with Hall, wishes they could eat more crab legs. — *M. C.*

**June 8, 2020 — Cicero, Ill.**

When Kenneally met Jennifer Villa in late spring, Villa was organizing donated food that had been dropped off in the alleyway outside her home while her kitchen was being repaired. Villa and her children, whose last names are Rodriguez, were already struggling before the pandemic brought new difficulties: less fresh food and longer pantry lines. Villa, 29, receives $900 a month in disability payments for a potentially debilitating neural disorder that causes her feet to swell and makes it uncomfortable to stand for a long time. On occasion, supplies run out before her turn comes up. But when they do get food, her children, Armani, 8, Troy, 6 (seated) and Sonia, 4 (in the box), are "very excited." She says they will tell her: "Oh, Mommy, we're going to have food tonight. We're not going to go to sleep with no food in our tummy." — *C. d. L.*

Kellogg's
CORN FLAKES
OUR
BEST IN
EVERY
BITE
AMAZING
GRAINS
OVERNIGHT OATS
CRANBERRY MAPLE
MAR2020 XOR 1 22:15

**June 12, 2020 — St. Louis**

By June, the social upheavals following the killing of George Floyd had created even more instabilities for some families. In St. Louis, Kenneally visited Manausha Russ, 28, a few days after protests led to the closure of a nearby Family Dollar, where Russ used to buy staples like milk, cereal and diapers. "The stores by my house were all looted," she says. "They took everything." Russ now has to drive farther to buy groceries for her partner, Lamarr, and her four daughters: Aliza, 1 (left), Nyla, 6 (on counter), Amarri, 5 (on floor) and Kadynce, 8. Russ works delivering food to low-income pregnant women through a nonprofit called Operation Food Search and receives about $635 a month in food stamps, but it isn't always sufficient. "Some days I feel like I have a lot," she says, "and some days I feel like I don't have enough." — *M. W.*

Magic Chef

**June 17, 2020 — Memphis**

Some days, Gesma Mohamed gets two or three hours of sleep; if she's lucky, she might get five. Mohamed, a single mother with three small children, including Abdualleh, seen here at 7 months, works 10-hour night shifts till dawn processing returned packages at a warehouse. "Every time I come home, the kids say, 'Mama, mama, we hungry!' " Before she can go to bed, she cooks them the day's meals, which sometimes include *fufu*, a West African dish made of cassava and yams or plantains. (Mohamed fled her home in Darfur in 2010.) Beginning this month, her case worker told her, her food stamps will be cut to $32 per month, from $500. She is trying to figure out why. "I have nobody," says Mohamed, who is separated from her husband. "It's scary. Every time you need benefits from the government, they leave you alone. They say, 'We don't help you.' " *— M. C.*

**June 19, 2020 — Memphis**

By mid-June, daytime temperatures in Memphis hovered near 90 degrees. All through the spring, a neighbor named Donna Rice picked up free school lunches at a church and passed them out to children in her condominium complex on the city's east side, including to the Boughton sisters: Brooklyn (far right), 4; Chynna, 9; and Katie, 8, seen here with a neighbor's toddler (left) who has since moved away. The girls' mother, Nicole Boughton, 32, receives disability payments and, until recently, food stamps. "I was trying to get the pandemic food stamps like my sister has," Boughton says, referring to the temporary boost in benefits approved by Congress in March. Instead, in June her food-stamp payments stopped altogether, and she's not sure why. "I'm waiting on the letter to come in," she says.— *M. W.*

**June 23, 2020 — Jackson, Miss.**

CHUNN'S
ALL AMERICAN BAIL BONDS
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Without a car, Patricia Luckett, 57, has to walk to most places — including a nonprofit called Stewpot Community Services, where she occasionally picks up enough groceries to fill her shopping cart. Luckett, who spends about $100 a week on food, insists she doesn't mind the 30-minute trek: The exercise is good for her. "I got diabetes, high blood pressure and a bad heart" — and the walking, she says, "makes my legs stronger." Early in the pandemic, according to Jill Barnes Buckley, Stewpot's executive director, the organization changed its focus to delivering groceries to older residents. "We have enough food, and we have figured out how to do that," Buckley says. But, she adds, "it is the shelter system that is the most in flux right now." Indeed, when Luckett told her landlord that her place needed a new roof, she was told she might have to move out. — *L. G.*

DO NOT BE
WITH YOU
4 13

**June 25, 2020 — Jackson, Miss.**

In recent years, about a fifth of the population in Mississippi — and a quarter of its children — have been living in a state of food insecurity, defined as a lack of access to the amount or kind of food needed to keep people in good health. The Social Security income ($802 per month) and food stamps ($16 per month before the pandemic, $170 since) that go to Deborah Sulton, 66, aren't enough to take care of those among her 25 grandchildren or 13 great-grandchildren staying with her at any given time. "The way I feed is, I cook like a cook for an army," she says. So she relies on others for help. "The church is good — it helps out a whole lot of people in the community," she says. Stewpot, too, she adds. "If I were to win a big lottery, Lord, I would help Stewpot a lot." — *L. G.*

Danish
CHEESE
Bear Claw
DANISH
CHERRY CHEESE
BIG TEXAS
Cinnamon Roll
Duchess
Jumbo Honey Bun
Doritos
Flamin' Hot
NACHO
FUNYUNS
Onion Flavored Rings
Cheetos
Flamin' Hot
Crunchy
FRIES
Lay's
Classic
Famous Amos
Chocolate Chip
42
SNAP
cheesy, thin & crispy
21
CHEDDAR SOUR CREAM & ONION

**June 30, 2020 — Jackson, Miss.**

Deidre Lyons, 28, lives with her three children and her father, sister and niece in an area often referred to as a "food desert," because its residents lack easy access to grocery stores or other sources of healthy food. Though Lyons receives $524 per month in food stamps, she has no regular means of transportation to travel far for groceries, which leaves her reliant on close-by stores like the Dude With the Food, where Lyons's son, Jaheim, 4, is buying a corn dog. Occasionally Lyons's cousin, when she isn't caring for her own children, will take her to shop for supplies, which enables her family to make the home-cooked meals they swear by. "My kids eat whatever we cook, because they aren't picky eaters," Lyons says. "I'm hoping they stay like that. They'd rather have vegetables than macaroni or rice." — *J. N.*

**July 7, 2020 — Houston**

In early July, as the pandemic was cresting in Texas — the number of new infections would peak soon after — Ana Rivera, 6, waited with her mother, Kelly Rivera, for nearly two hours to get food from Catholic Charities. Rivera, a single mom with three kids who makes $688 every two weeks as a teacher's aide, goes to the food bank on Wednesdays to supplement what she is able to buy with food stamps. "There are times they give you what you need," she says, "and there are times they don't give you what you need. You can't be picky." Rivera has a message for those who are struggling but who are too proud to visit food banks: "Don't be ashamed. That is what the community is there for, to help." — *T.A.*

**July 18, 2020 — Hatch, N.M.**

Yasmin (left) and Yeslin Reyes, 11-year-old fraternal twins, are the only members of their family who don't work in the onion fields, but that will change next summer. Their older brothers started when they turned 12, and the same is expected of them. "At first it's going to take a lot of time to get used to it," Yasmin says, "but I think it's going to be OK." Their older brother Juan Pablo, who is 18, used to fill six boxes of onions a day, earning roughly $13 a box, or about $400 per week; he is using that money to attend college at the University of Hawaii this year. "People that work at the bottom of the food chain, cultivating all these different crops, are basically the builders of our country," he says.— *C. d. L.*

**July 23, 2020 — Tucson, Ariz.**

George Ruder, is 65, overweight and H.I.V. positive and has diabetes — four factors that make him especially vulnerable to Covid-19, and after his husband's death a few years ago, he's the sole breadwinner at home. "Who's going to take care of her?" he asks, referring to his daughter, Mariana, 11. Last year, Ruder visited a food pantry for the first time. "Seeing all these people in line," he says, "I'm thinking, Oh, God, maybe I should just go home. Mostly, I was scared of not qualifying." Once a month now, Ruder, whose work as a custodian at the University of Arizona arena was suspended along with the basketball season in March, picks up four or five boxes from a food bank. For health reasons, he is trying to eat more fruit, salad and soup, including one his mother used to make: fried pasta shells, tomato sauce, water and diced tomatoes. "It's what we called 'cheap soup,'" he says. — *K.P.*

**July 31, 2020 — San Diego**

At the end of July, Kenneally reached the West Coast, where she met Alexis Frost Cazimero. An event planner and hair stylist who has been out of work since early in the pandemic, Cazimero now spends her days driving around San Diego County with three of her children, Mason, 6 (not pictured); Carson, 5; and Coco, 1, collecting food for her family and for neighbors and friends who are unable to leave their homes or reluctant to seek help. Cazimero leads an informal barter network among families — distributing day-old doughnuts in a trailer-home park, picking up bread that is close to expiration from Vons, a grocery chain — and says she is grateful for the experiences. "Being that person in the community that shares and brings resources to the people that can't get them brings purpose to my family," she says. — *T.A.*

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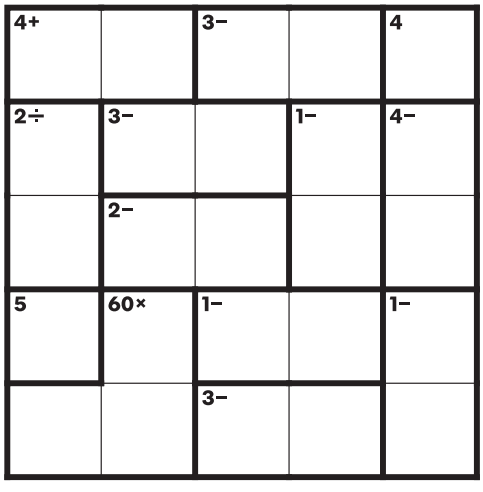
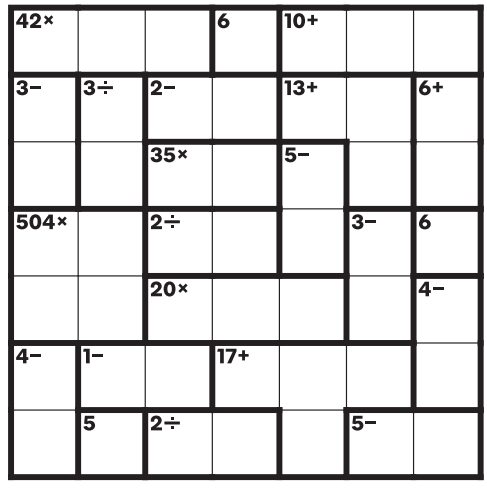
The New York Times

# KENKEN

Fill the grid with digits so as not to repeat a digit in any row or column, and so that the digits within each heavily outlined box will produce the target number shown, by using addition, subtraction, multiplication or division, as indicated in the box. A 5x5 grid will use the digits 1–5. A 7x7 grid will use 1–7.

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## Answers to puzzles of 8.30.20

ALL AFLUTTER

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| A | L | E | E | ■ | C | H | A | O | S | T | H | E | O | R | Y | ■ | S | N | I | T |
| B | E | S | P | O | K | E | ■ | A | U | R | A | S | ■ | P | C | G | A | M | E | S |
| ■ | ■ | M | A | N | O | R | ■ | C | R | Y | P | T | ■ | S | E | E | Y | A | ■ | ■ |
| ■ | M | A | N | A | ■ | ■ | ■ | T | E | M | P | O | ■ | ■ | ■ | T | S | K | S | ■ |
| J | U | L | ■ | G | A | R | B | ■ | D | E | Y | ■ | C | A | L | F | ■ | E | T | C |
| E | S | L | ■ | E | L | V | E | S | ■ | ■ | ■ | M | O | V | E | R | ■ | A | R | E |
| S | I | T | ■ | R | A | S | S | L | E | ■ | H | E | C | A | T | E | ■ | L | E | N |
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| I | M | I | N | ■ | O | F | F | T | O | ■ | D | I | A | R | Y | ■ | A | T | M | O |
| C | A | N | D | O | ■ | O | R | C | S | ■ | J | A | P | E | ■ | E | T | H | E | R |
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| D | I | F | F | E | R | E | N | C | E | ■ | I | N | T | H | E | W | O | R | L | D |
| E | V | A | L | ■ | A | D | E | E | R | ■ | E | D | I | T | S | ■ | W | I | L | E |
| S | E | R | A | ■ | G | E | A | R | S | ■ | S | O | R | T | A | ■ | A | S | I | N |
| ■ | S | E | T | ■ | E | N | T | S | ■ | ■ | R | E | P | S | ■ | N | E | S | ■ | ■ |

KENKEN

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| 5 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 1 |
| 4 | 2 | 5 | 1 | 3 |
| 2 | 5 | 1 | 3 | 4 |
| 3 | 1 | 4 | 5 | 2 |
| 1 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 5 |

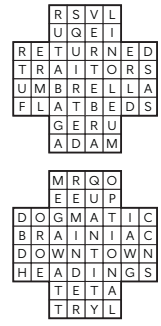
| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | 2 | 7 | 3 | 6 | 5 | 1 |
| 7 | 5 | 3 | 6 | 1 | 2 | 4 |
| 3 | 4 | 6 | 1 | 5 | 7 | 2 |
| 1 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 7 |
| 2 | 1 | 4 | 5 | 7 | 6 | 3 |
| 5 | 3 | 2 | 7 | 4 | 1 | 6 |
| 6 | 7 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

ACROSTIC

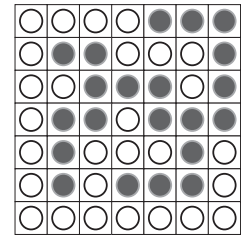
**(JANE) GOODALL, THROUGH A WINDOW** — We clear a tiny peephole and stare through. No wonder we are confused by the tiny fraction of a whole that we see. It is … like trying to comprehend the panorama of the desert or the sea through a rolled-up newspaper.

A. Genotype
B. Orthoptic
C. Obtuse
D. Drenched
E. Astrochimp
F. Lay waste
G. Last word
H. Trainee
I. Half-asleep
J. Replete
K. Open fire
L. Underfoot
M. Ghostly
N. Henhouse
O. Anathema
P. Wear thin
Q. Inherent
R. Naked ape
S. Dairy cow
T. Outgrowth
U. Wherefore

CRAZY EIGHTS




YIN-YANG



## Answers to puzzle on Page 52

SPELLING BEE

Wreckage (3 points). Also: Acreage, agree, arrearage, awake, aware, career, crack, cracker, creak, eager, garage, gawker, gewgaw, grace, racer, rarer, rawer, reggae, wager, wacker, wearer, wrack, wreak. If you found other legitimate dictionary words in the beehive, feel free to include them in your score.

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The New York Times | SERIAL

# Nice White Parents

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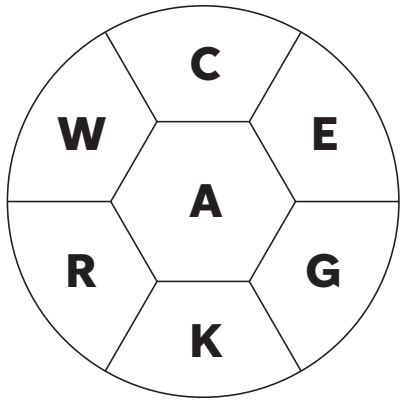
# SPELLING BEE

By Frank Longo

How many common words of 5 or more letters can you spell using the letters in the hive? Every answer must use the center letter at least once. Letters may be reused in a word. At least one word will use all 7 letters. Proper names and hyphenated words are not allowed. Score 1 point for each answer, and 3 points for a word that uses all 7 letters.

Rating: 9 = good; 16 = excellent; 23 = genius




Our list of words, worth 26 points, appears with last week's answers.

# THREE OF A KIND

By Patrick Berry

Complete each sentence with three words of the same length that differ by only one letter. One sentence has been filled in for you (SHOOT, SHOUT and SHORT). Note that the same letter must change in all three words.

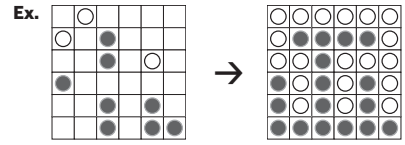
Ex. Adding another month to the film SHOOT prompted the actor to SHOUT, "We're only making a SHORT!" (5)

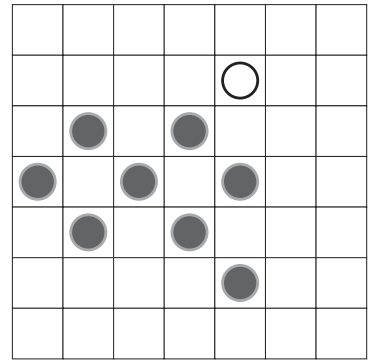
1. In a leafy green _____, the maiden embraced her knight in shining _____ with great _____. (5)
2. You can't force people to walk the _____ on a _____, so air pirates have to make other _____. (5)
3. It's just _____ common sense to wash your _____ in a _____ of water before making pesto. (5)
4. The _____ of seeds must've fallen out of my _____ somewhere near the _____ fence. (6)
5. At the Battle of the Marne, rainstorms would _____ the _____ as they huddled miserably in their _____. (6)
6. The manager of the vacation destination had an angry _____ for the journalist who wrote an unflattering _____ about his _____. (6)
7. At the golf course, it drives me _____ when rich _____ take cellphone calls while standing in the _____. (7)
8. I would never _____ to join a _____, because I'm not _____ to live my life as a nun. (7)

# YIN-YANG

By Wei-Hwa Huang

Put a white or dark circle in each cell so that all the white circles are connected along their edges in an unbroken chain and all the dark circles are connected along their edges in an unbroken chain. No two-by-two set of cells can be all white or all dark.



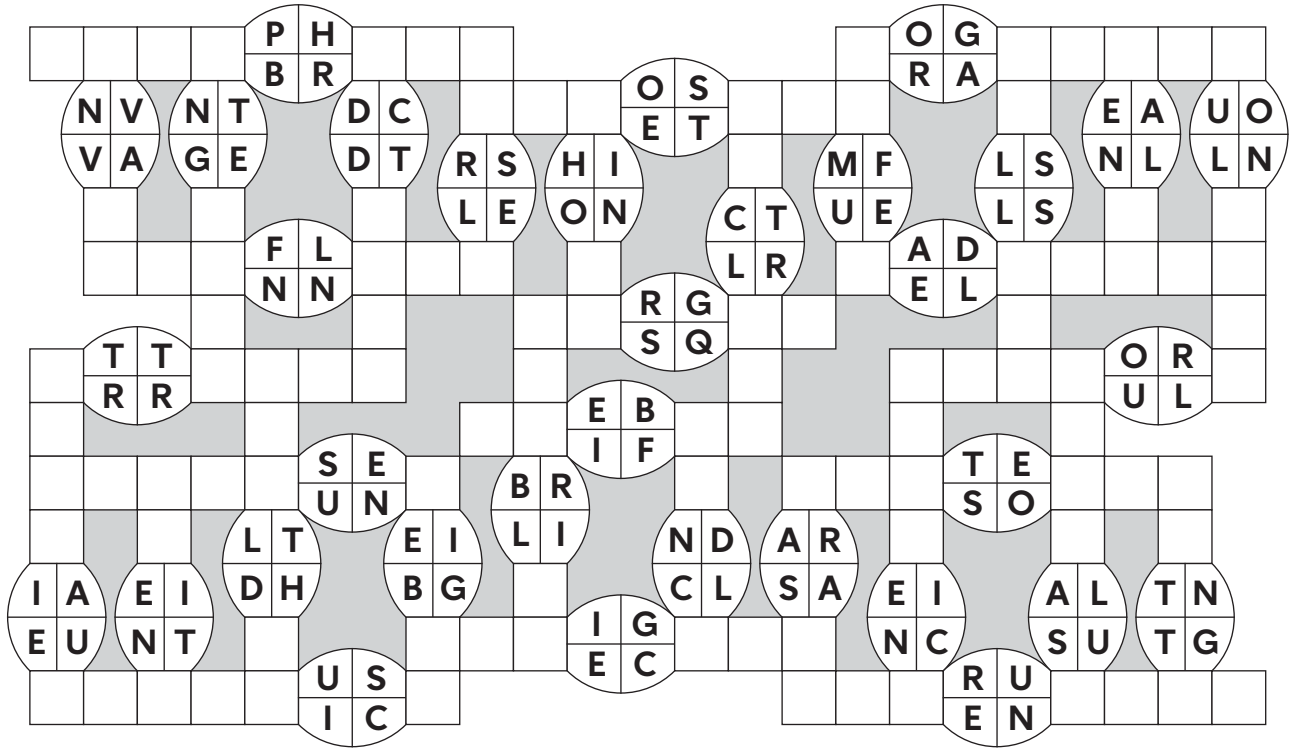
# SPLIT DECISIONS

By Fred Piscop

The only clues in this crossword are the letter pairs provided in the grid. Each answer across and down consists of two words, which share the letters to be entered in the empty squares. In the example below, the letters S, E and W are added to complete the words SINEW and SCREW. Some of the combinations in the grid may have more than one possible answer, but only one will fit with all the crossings.

Example:

becomes



**Contributors**

*(Continued from Page 4)*

Additional Reporting:

**Tim Arango**

Tim Arango is a Los Angeles-based national correspondent for The Times. He spent seven years as Baghdad bureau chief and also covered Turkey. Before heading overseas, he had been a media reporter for The Times since 2007.

**Maddy Crowell**

Maddy Crowell is a freelance writer based in New York. Her work has appeared in Harper's, The Atlantic, The Point, Lapham's Quarterly and The Virginia Quarterly Review.

**Lovia Gyarkye**

Lovia Gyarkye is an associate editor for NYT Mag Labs.

**Concepción de León**

Concepción de León is a reporter covering breaking news for The Times. She has written about the publishing industry, television and culture.

**Jake Nevins**

Jake Nevins is a writer and former editorial fellow for the magazine. He last wrote about lip reading.

**Kevin Pang**

Kevin Pang is a writer and filmmaker based in Chicago.

**Malia Wollan**

Malia Wollan is a contributing writer for the magazine and the weekly Tip columnist. She lives in Oakland.

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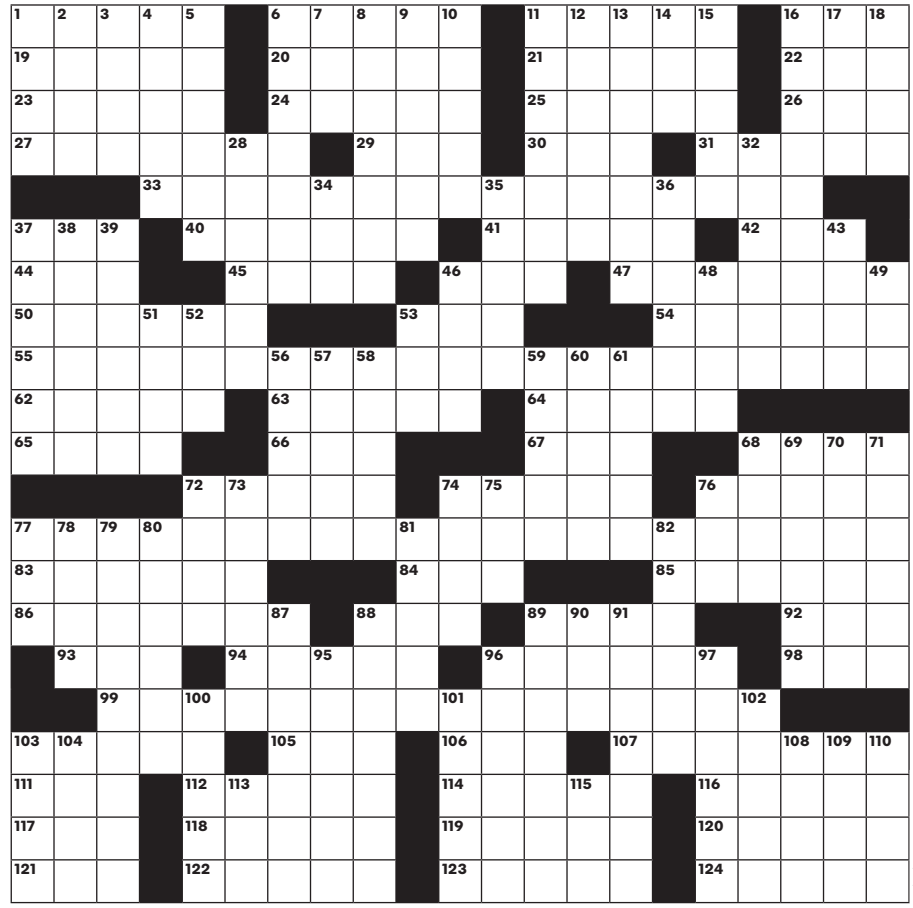
# COULD YOU REPEAT THAT NUMBER?

By David Kwong

David Kwong is a magician and crossword constructor in Los Angeles who regularly combines puzzles and sleight of hand in his performances. His 2014 TED Talk (posted on TED.com) includes a trick with a New York Times crossword and has been viewed 1.7 million times to date. David has a new virtual show with puzzles, titled "Inside the Box," opening in a few weeks with the Geffen Playhouse in Los Angeles. This puzzle is his 21st crossword for The Times. — W.S.



9/6/20

**ACROSS**

**1** Part of a backpack
**6** Pyramids, often
**11** Dutch requirements
**16** Evan : Welsh :: __ : Scottish
**19** One of Chekhov's "Three Sisters"
**20** Hunter of myth
**21** Bring to bear
**22** Result, maybe, in brief
**23** Many apartments in old warehouse districts
**24** Japanese comics style
**25** Labor Day baby, e.g.
**26** Shape formed by an extended thumb and index fingers
**27** Good person to believe in
**29** Switz. neighbor
**30** Writer Tarbell who took on Standard Oil
**31** Pins are placed at the end of them
**33** 07 film
**37** Some E.M.T. cases
**40** Buying binges
**41** Count in music
**42** Logical start?
**44** U preceder
**45** Picked from a lineup, informally
**46** Hurt
**47** Proverbs
**50** Like puppeteers, usually
**53** Maven
**54** Leafy crown material
**55** Day competitor
**62** Bailiwicks
**63** Legal
**64** Chief Chirpa and others, in sci-fi
**65** Wastes away
**66** "Fantasy" Grammy winner
**67** Cool, in old slang
**68** "The way things are currently going …"
**72** Muscle problem
**74** Muscular
**76** Grammy-winning country singer Black
**77** Play combo of old
**83** Mark __, winner of the 1998 Masters
**84** George Carlin was its first host, for short
**85** State capital on the Colorado River
**86** Subject of Newton's first law of motion
**88** Dealers do this
**89** Have an in-tents experience?
**92** QB's pass: Abbr.
**93** "__ to My Socks," Pablo Neruda poem
**94** Larsson who wrote "The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo"
**96** Additionally
**98** Deletes, with "out"
**99** Tree alternative
**103** Kind of salami
**105** N.Y.C.'s first subway line
**106** Like some gas: Abbr.
**107** "Big Sur" novelist, 1962
**111** A suggestion
**112** World capital whose name comes from the Greek for "wisdom"
**114** Humble
**116** Jazz composer with an Egyptian-inspired name
**117** "__ your call"
**118** "Elements of Algebra" author, 1770
**119** First lady of the 1950s
**120** Kind of pear that resembles an apple
**121** Rapper with the 2003 hit "I Can"
**122** "Judge __" (1995 Stallone movie)
**123** __ and curl (salon treatment)
**124** Not interfere with

**DOWN**

**1** Tower over the field
**2** Sci-fi film with vehicles called "light cycles"
**3** Loaded (with)
**4** Prone to fidgeting
**5** Some 1990s Toyotas
**6** American fashion designer who once served as the creative director at Gucci and Yves Saint Laurent
**7** __ pro nobis
**8** Mixed together
**9** Gets one over on
**10** Junkyard warning, maybe
**11** Play back?
**12** Rust and quartz
**13** Equity valuation stat
**14** Tiny bit of work
**15** Vodka brand, informally
**16** She gained fame from her leading role in "Fame"
**17** Having the means
**18** __ Lofgren, guitarist for the E Street Band
**28** Wolflike
**32** Great two-pair poker hand
**34** Once called
**35** Spanish resort island
**36** "Sure, I guess …"
**37** Relating to egg cells
**38** Actor who won a 2016 Presidential Medal of Freedom
**39** Six-line verse
**43** Wilson of "Meet the Parents"
**46** Colloquial contraction
**48** Stops up
**49** Surreptitious
**51** Greek H's
**52** Golfer Ernie
**53** It ended on Nov. 11, 1918
**56** Swell up
**57** Laundry soap since 1908
**58** "__, all ye faithful"
**59** Classic fruity sodas
**60** Occupied, with "in"
**61** Accept as charged
**68** "How sad!"
**69** Liquor levy, e.g.
**70** Provoke
**71** Surgical inserts
**72** Painter José María __
**73** Kind words
**74** "Va __" (Italian "All right")
**75** Something to bookmark
**76** Film director Jon
**77** You, to Yves
**78** "__ doctor, but …"
**79** Trait of a clingy romantic partner
**80** Lead singer of rock's Yeah Yeah Yeahs (who uses just the initial of her last name)
**81** Churchill's trademark gesture
**82** Author born Truman Streckfus Persons
**87** Not much at all
**88** Ballet attire
**89** Pig in a poke or pigeon drop
**90** "The Simpsons" grandpa
**91** "More of the __" (1967 No. 1 album)
**95** Weepy 1954 Patti Page hit
**96** Haberdasher's clasp
**97** Of the ankle
**100** Stunned, in a way
**101** Walk heavily
**102** Contemptible sort
**103** Toothy smile
**104** Jazz's James
**108** Condo, e.g.
**109** Kaffiyeh wearer
**110** Christmas-tree hanging
**113** Just between us?
**115** Family nickname

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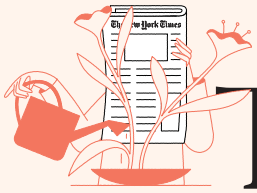

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